

SENATOR TED KENNEDY, JR.

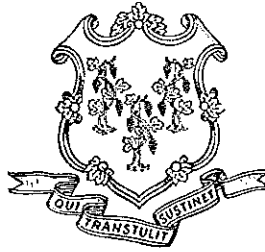
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Senator Ted Kennedy Jr.

March 17, 2015

In support of:

S.B. 271, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reform to Promote Aging in Place.

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee: thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on **Senate Bill 271**, "An Act Concerning Medicaid Reform to Promote Aging in Place." As State Senator from Connecticut's 12th Senate District, it is my pleasure to offer my unqualified support for this critical legislation.

Far too often, many of our older or disabled citizens are forced to enter nursing homes following a hospital discharge because Connecticut policy does not permit presumptive eligibility for Medicaid coverage as it pertains to home care. Nursing homes, which allow for presumptive eligibility as part of admission decisions, are often three times more costly than home care services and thus place a significant financial burden on the state and many citizens for whom home care would likely be a more appropriate option. But given the fact that most decisions regarding nursing home admissions are made under duress, the inflexibility of our state's presumptive eligibility laws too often result in citizens being treated in expensive nursing homes instead of receiving care at home.

Senate Bill 271 provides an important first step towards enabling citizens who need nursing care to receive that care in a home or community setting. Under this legislation, Connecticut would enact a one-year pilot program that would enable caregivers to enroll 50 qualified individuals who meet Medicaid's financial and eligibility standards. This would allow these residents immediate access to home care while their applications await final approval, giving them the opportunity to receive the treatment they need while simultaneously reducing the state's administrative burden. Further, this bill provides the ability to determine applicant eligibility without sacrificing accuracy, as evidenced by the fact that states that offer presumptive eligibility for home care have reported an error rate of less than two percent.

There is substantive evidence indicating that an expansion of presumptive eligibility will not only help individuals and families save money, but also the state as well. Our Office of Fiscal Analysis has reported that the average daily rate for home care is \$58, compared with \$205 a day for nursing homes. And it is estimated that applicants receiving home care as a result of